



Don and Dolores Price are two of the many White Horse Village residents who can be found on the community's Bocce court every Saturday enjoying some fierce—but friendly—competition.

On the Ball

By Christy Brudin

The intensity in the eyes. The roar of the crowd. The joy after a score.

This is not NFL Sunday, or even the high school soccer league. It's the Bocce court at White Horse Village, a continuing care retirement community in Newtown Square, PA. Every Saturday morning from May through October, more than 100 competitors and 50 spectators gather on the two Bocce courts for several hours of fierce—but friendly—competition.

"We are really out there to have fun, but the competitive nature takes over," says Bocce Committee Co-Chair John Young of the weekly matches. "It is a testament to the competitive drive at White Horse that you see so many residents practicing throughout the week and honing their skills."

Teams are organized according to the different neighborhoods that make up White Horse Village, which helps to build camaraderie. "The various living areas all have teams, and it gets really competitive," explains Bill Moore, who is also a Bocce Committee Co-Chair. "All of the areas want to be on top at the end of the day."

Among the many residents on the Bocce court every week are Don and Dolores Price. The couple competes every Saturday and practices at least one other day per week. Although they had never played Bocce before White Horse's first court opened in 2014, they were fast fans of the sport because it is both accessible and fun.

"Someone with no athletic ability—like me—can end up winning a game by throwing the last ball and breaking things apart," says Don. "Bocce has an unpredictable quality that makes it very exciting."

While they are Bocce devotees, Don and Dolores are also active participants in many other activities at White Horse. They moved to the community nine years ago, and their level of engagement continues to grow.

"We started looking at retirement communities because we wanted a safety net. We wanted to know that we would have care as we grew older, if we needed it," says Dolores. "But what drew us to White Horse specifically was the people. From our first tour, the residents and staff were so friendly and open and interesting."

Natives of California, the Prices met at the University of California, Berkley. They moved to the east coast so Don could pursue his career while Dolores continued her education.



Every Saturday morning from May through October, more than 100 competitors, including Alice Swan, gather on the two Bocce courts.

Dolores is a psychologist and operated a private practice for decades. She retired when the couple moved to White Horse. "White Horse has so many activities and so many great people to get to know, and I wanted to focus on that," she says.

A marketing and management executive, Don continued working even after the couple moved to White Horse. He was an Executive Vice President with Wawa for 35 years, and he found his work incredibly rewarding. Even after retiring, Don returned to work when the company asked him back. His only condition for coming out of retirement was a title change. For the last five years of his career, Don served as the "Minister of Magic." He says, "I had absolutely the greatest job in the world, and I was still working a 60 hour week at 80 years old."

Since finally retiring, both Don and Dolores have become even more active at White Horse. Dolores enjoys serving on various committees, as it allows her to get to know her fellow residents. She is also an avid gardener, maintaining a small plot in front of the couple's house. Dolores helps out with the communal Harvester's Garden on campus as well. Last year, the garden won a Blue Ribbon award from The Pennsylvania Horticulture Society. As for socializing, Dolores maintains a full calendar, as the member of three book clubs and a wine club.

In addition to playing Bocce, Don enjoys attending the

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Teams often spend their free time practicing in preparation for Bocce matches. (Pictured: Joann Palmer (left) and Joel Weaver)

many events and activities at the community, especially the music programs, including concerts by the in-house chorus and other highly acclaimed local musicians.

The Prices are quick to point out that there is something for everyone at White Horse. Other athletic activities include shuffleboard, fitness classes and swimming. There is also a club for virtually every interest—from classic cars to ceramics.

The community offers dining options to satisfy even the most sophisticated palates as well. “The food here is well prepared and beautifully served. If I have a choice of going out to eat or eating here, I choose to eat right here,” Don says.

As someone who is familiar with “magic”—that somewhat amorphous quality that popular brands deliver—Don has been impressed with White Horse from the beginning. “Here at White Horse, they really know how to create the magic,” he says. “The entire staff is so impressive, and what is most remarkable about them is how much they care. They go out of their way to get to know all the residents, and they go the extra mile to anticipate our needs.”

That general sense of caring and community also extends to the residents. Dolores notes, “The connections we have made with the people here have been absolutely amazing.” In

fact, the couple received vital support from both the residents and staff at White Horse following a devastating personal tragedy.

“We lost our son two years ago, and the kindness and support we received was amazing,” says Dolores. “The efforts they made to help us were unbelievable. There was always food arriving at our door, not to mention endless kinds words and support.”

Like most prospective retirement community residents, the Prices admit they were hesitant at first—about moving, about leaving their long-term neighborhood, and about becoming part of a new community. “I think it is normal to be apprehensive; we both were,” explains Dolores. “But at least once a month since we moved, Don has said to me, ‘Thank god you made me move. This is the right place for us.’” She couldn’t agree more.

— Don Price, on the staff at White Horse Village

At White Horse Village, residents like the Prices find a place to belong—and a place to compete. Competitive games are so popular among the residents because playing and winning frankly never gets old. But the residents at White Horse Village know that whether they win or lose on the Bocce court, the pleasure derived from some friendly competition is ageless—and priceless. GRL